

Good Food Nation Briefings: Suggested Content

This document contains suggested text on a range of topics to be used as the basis of Good Food Nation briefings. This material is designed to be a starting point for such documents. We know that Relevant Authorities have their customary formats, and so expect that users will select the pieces of text that are most useful for them, and adapt them to their particular needs.

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Background to the Good Food Nation Act

The GFN Act is a novel piece of framework legislation designed to create the conditions for, and deliver over time, a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable Scottish food system for all. It places new statutory requirements on Scottish Ministers and Relevant Authorities to produce, publish, report, review and revise National and Local Good Food Nation Plans with biannual progress reporting and five yearly reviews. Relevant Authorities are defined as all 32 local authorities and 14 territorial health boards meaning 46 agencies will be required to prepare local plans within 24 months of Section 10 of the Act coming into effect.

The Scottish Government published the first National Good Food Nation Plan on 17th December 2025, after 40 months of development including public consultation (January 2024 – April 2024) and parliamentary scrutiny (June 2025 – September 2025). An accompanying secondary statutory instrument (SSI), entitled Specified Functions and Descriptions, which will specify the relevant functions and descriptions of functions that will need to have regard for the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 and the National Good Food Nation Plan, was laid before the Scottish Parliament for scrutiny in October 2025. Following a call for views, and an oral evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands in early December 2025, the Rural Affairs and Islands committee voted to not recommend the SSI to the Scottish Parliament and in mid-December 2025 the SSI was withdrawn by the Scottish Government. A revised SSI is expected to be laid before parliament for scrutiny in Autumn/Winter 2026.

The Scottish Government issued further guidance on 17th March 2026 that gave notice from 1 April 2026 that Section 10 – which lays out the specific requirements on all relevant authorities – is due to formally commence on 1st April 2027. Relevant Authorities will be required to publish our 1st Local Good Food Nation Plans by 1st April 2028. This means that, including the 12-month notice period of Section 10 commencement, we have been given approx. two years to plan and develop our Plan. Additional financial resources to support this new planning requirement have not yet been agreed, and at time of writing (September 2026) are expected to be detailed in the winter 2026 Scottish budget.



Requirements for Local Good Food Nation Plans

The first National Good Food Nation Plan outlines 6 primary outcomes:

Outcome 1	The food environment in Scotland enables people to eat well. Everyone benefits from reliable and dignified access to safe, nutritious, affordable, enjoyable, sustainable and age-appropriate food.
Outcome 2	Scotland's food system is sustainable and contributes to a flourishing natural environment on our land and in our waters. It supports our net zero and climate adaptation ambitions and plays an important role in maintaining and improving animal health and welfare and in restoring and regenerating biodiversity.
Outcome 3	Scotland's food environment and wider food system enables and promotes a physically and mentally healthy population. This leads to the prevention of, and a reduction in, diet-related conditions.
Outcome 4	Our food and drink sector is prosperous, diverse, innovative, and vital to national and local economic and social wellbeing. It is key to making Scotland food secure and food resilient and creates and sustains jobs and businesses underpinned by fair work standards throughout food supply chains.
Outcome 5	People and communities are empowered to participate in, and shape, their food system. Scotland has a thriving food culture with a population who are educated about good and sustainable food.
Outcome 6	Decisions we make in Scotland contribute positively to local and global food systems transformation. Scotland actively engages in learning and exchanging knowledge and best practice internationally.

Local GFN plans are required to set out:

The main outcomes in relation to food-related issues, which the Relevant Authority wants to achieve. The indicators, or other measures by which progress towards achieving the outcomes will be measured.

The policies the relevant authority intends to pursue to deliver the outcomes, and measure progress. Their plans for ensuring that implementation of the policies are informed by the food business sector. No explicit targets or indicators of progress were included in the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act.



However, the Good Food Nation Act also requires Relevant Authorities to have regard for the scope of food-related issues that will affect outcomes in relation to several issues when developing their Local Good Food Nation Plans; these include but are not limited to:

- Social and economic wellbeing
- Environment, including climate change and the natural environment
- Health and physical and mental wellbeing
- Economic development
- Animal welfare
- Education
- Child poverty

Finally, the legislation also places a duty on Relevant Authorities to 'have regard to' a set of high-level principles when developing local plans and discharging allied duties (e.g. school food legislation)

- The fact that each part of the food system and supply chain plays an important role in the provision of food
- The role of a sustainable food system and supply chain in contributing to the mitigation of climate change, halting and reversing loss of biodiversity, and improving animal welfare
- The ability of high quality, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food to improve the health and physical and mental wellbeing of people
- The fact that adequate food is a human right and essential to the realisation of other human rights
- The importance of the food business sector to be a thriving part of the Scottish economy, having resilient supply chains, operating with fair work standards, and contributing to resilient local economics across Scotland.

The Scottish Food Commission

The Scottish Food Commission (SFC) was also created through provisions made in the Good Food Nation Act. It has responsibility for overseeing and scrutinising National and Local Good Food Nation Plans, and has now been established with the following appointments:

- Dennis Overton, Chair
- Mary Brennan, Commissioner
- Emilie Combet, Commissioner
- Graeme Jack, Commissioner
- Jayne Jones, Chief Executive

The Scottish Food Commission will: oversee the Good Food Nation planning process; provide advice and guidance to Scottish Minsters and Relevant Authorities; showcase good practice; undertake independent scrutiny and, where necessary, make formal recommendations to Scottish Minsters and/or Relevant Authorities; provide strategic food systems leadership; and hold Scottish Minsters and Relevant Authorities to account in relation to progress towards delivering the National and Local Good Food Nation Plans.



Lead Contacts and GFN Ambassadors/Champions

Each Relevant Authority is required to have identified a lead contact to lead Good Food Nation planning to act as the single point of contact between the Scottish Government, Scottish Food Commission and the Authority.

For this Relevant Authority, the lead GFN Contact is: <Full name>

As developing our Local Good Food Nation Plan is a cross-cutting activity, requiring linkages to, and across, a range of strategic themes, it would be helpful to establish an ambassador/champion role aligned to a Cabinet/Board portfolio role holder to provide further oversight and champion the work of Good Food Nation planning. This will support, and enhance, the benefits accrued from the planned (or initiated) cross-partner work ensuring the Local Good Food Nation Plan is developed in full knowledge of all the work already happening across the Good Food Nation outcome areas outlined above.

For this Relevant Authority, the GFN Ambassador is: <Full name>

Membership of Working/Steering/Strategic Planning Groups

It is proposed the Relevant Authority create a strategic planning working group to incorporate key service leads involved as part of the development of the plan and this will be extended as the development of the local plan progresses. Currently, key services may include:

- Catering Services
- Corporate Support
- Dietetics
- Economic Growth
- Education Services
- Estates and Sustainability
- Environmental Health
- Legal
- Procurement and Catering
- Public Health
- Third Sector
- Waste

ACTION: add any other relevant services, including those of local initiatives, to this list (see this document from the Living Good Food Nation Lab for further guidance – add link when available).

An Action Plan is currently being developed and will build on existing food-related work across the Relevant Authority, which may include:

- Initiatives addressing food insecurity and tackling food poverty such as food aid/redistribution groups, community food/larders, and community growing projects.
- Providing support for the local food industry through Business Support and Development and Employability and Skills activities under a Regional Economic Strategy.
- Partnership working and engagement with the regional food industry. This could be part of a network of sector-based groups, perhaps as part of a cross-sectoral Regional Economic Partnership.
- School meal provision and food procurement through Facilities Management, Universal Free School Meals, Food Education programmes, breakfast provision, and the review of the Food for Life accreditation, the quality of our school meal.
- Food safety enforcement by Environmental Health and compliance oversight by Licensing.



ACTION: add any other food-related activities taking place within the local authority to this list.

The 1st Local Good Food Nation Plan will adopt a whole-systems approach, aligning explicitly with Council priorities on reducing child poverty, tackling health inequalities, promoting sustainability, and lowering carbon emissions.

Partnership Working

Food partnerships bring together key stakeholders to facilitate collaboration across the food system e.g. Local Authority, NHS, HSCP's, colleges, universities, third sector, food growers, hospitality sector. Driving forward partnership working meaningfully requires coordination and sustained, adequate funding.

Decisions are to be taken as to whether Health Board and Local Authority Good Food Nation Plans will be produced separately (and complementary to any existing food partnership plans) or if there will be joint Plans, clearly outlining the contribution of each body or organisation involved.

The scope of Local Good Food Nation Plans is closely aligned to the focus of the Community Planning Partnership subgroups of Integrated Joint Boards i.e. community plans and local outcome improvement plans; therefore, joint planning agreements within Community Planning Partnership and Health Boards should support and enhance developments.

The scope also aligns with the themes of HSCP strategic plans, particularly the early intervention and prevention theme. Embedding the work in the Regional Anchor Board (if one exists) will also be key e.g. to support land and asset use for food growing and procuring food locally.

Collaborative Working

It has been proposed that a collaborative approach is taken to develop shared consultation methods and an outcome framework across the **<Region name> region** as a whole. The framework will ensure that local outcomes deliver on the policy areas of:

- Taking a whole systems approach to developing local food systems
- Improving access to food and reducing the reliance on emergency food aid
- Promoting the procurement of healthy and sustainable food by public bodies
- Supporting healthy diets through guidance and programs like free school meals
- Focusing on sustainability, including reducing food waste and supporting sustainable production

Following this each Relevant Authority is required to develop their own Local Good Food Nation plan outlining their outcomes, actions, targets and indicators to meet their statutory responsibilities and ensure localised approaches where these are appropriate. This approach however will ensure a cohesive and coherent set of outcomes across the region while allowing localised decision making and action to deliver upon them. The final Local Good Food Nation Plan will be subject to future consultation and Cabinet/Board approval.



Policy/Strategic Planning Implications

Development of the Local Good Food Nation Plan should also involve consideration on how it aligns with other strategic and delivery plans such as:

- Anti-Poverty and Inequalities Strategy
- Community Plan
- CPP Thematic Delivery Plans
- Council Strategic Plan
- Children and Young People's Services Plan
- Corporate Procurement Strategy
- Economic Strategy
- Health and Social Care Strategic Plan
- Local Development Plan

ACTION: add any other relevant strategic and delivery plans to this list.



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